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Washington, DC

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April 2, 2009

The Honorable John P. Murtha
Chairman, Subcommittee on Defense
House Appropriations Committee
H-149 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable C. W. Bill Young
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Defense
House Appropriations Committee
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Murtha and Ranking Member Young:

On behalf of all people living with multiple sclerosis, we would like to thank you for your support and funding of \$5 million for MS Research through the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs in the FY 2009 Defense Appropriations bill. In order to continue this vital and important research, we respectfully request that you allocate \$15 million in CDMRP funding for MS research in the FY 2010 Defense Appropriations bill.

Every hour in the United States, someone is newly diagnosed with MS. It is a chronic, unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system and is generally diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50, the prime of life. The cause is still unknown and there is no cure. Symptoms vary from person to person and from day to day in the same person. One person might experience abnormal fatigue and numbness. Another person could have difficulty walking, slurred speech, or bladder problems. People who live with severe MS have permanent symptoms, including paralysis and difficulties with vision or cognition. Some FDA-approved treatments are available, but they are very expensive and only slow the progression of the disease. Current medical treatments are not effective for many people and cannot be tolerated by many others.

Many U.S. veterans have stories and symptoms of multiple sclerosis. Preliminary evidence suggests that Gulf War veterans could have an increased risk of developing MS.


- A study in the *Annals of Neurology*, for example, identified 5,345 cases of MS among U.S. veterans that were deemed "service-connected." The number of service-connected cases was a significant increase from previous studies.
- An epidemiologic study found an unexpected, two-fold increase in MS between 1993 and 2000 in Kuwait, which suggests a potential environmental trigger for MS.
- Staff at the VA's MS Center of Excellence in Baltimore, MD, has noted the need to further study the increased incidence of MS among Gulf War veterans in particular.

- A 2004 report, entitled "Scientific Progress in Understanding Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses: Report and Recommendations," from a study group commissioned by the VA, suggests more research must be done on the potential link between MS and combat service.
- Approximately 28,000 veterans who are being treated at the VA have a diagnosis of MS; 5,345 of these veterans' illnesses have been deemed "service-connected", as noted above. The VA is currently funding two MS Centers of Excellence to provide clinical care and education for these veterans, but now physicians at these institutions are seeking funding to explore a potential link between MS and combat service and better treat these veterans.


This program will fund MS research that will shed more light on the causes, treatments and potential cures for MS that will help people who have combat service related MS as well as all others with the disease. Last year, the Defense Appropriations bill provided a new program for MS research under the CDMRP with a \$5 million appropriation. While this was an important step, we believe a more appropriate amount for this program would be \$15 million as previously requested. In just one funding cycle the DoD received 108 applications for MS research funding but were only able to fund 3 grants.

We ask that you fund research for multiple sclerosis by providing a \$15 million appropriation to the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs in the FY ~~2010~~ Defense Appropriations to fund MS research. This amount of funding will allow for studies to develop prognostic biomarkers, research focused on identifying genetic and environmental risk factors and grants to study new imaging technology to measure clinical trials. This funding could also be used to cover 2-3 Phase II clinical trials. The request is supported by the American Academy of Neurology, the National MS Society, the United Spinal Association, and the Vietnam Veterans of America. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



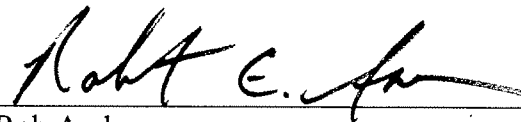
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Michael Burgess, M.D.
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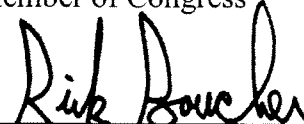
Mike Arcuri
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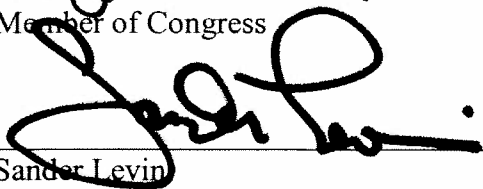



Howard Berman
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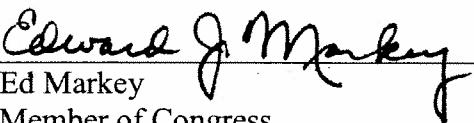


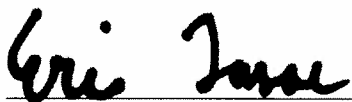
Rick Boucher
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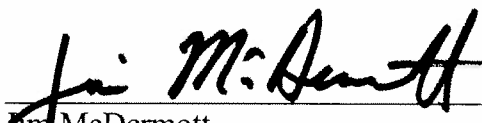

Jim Langevin
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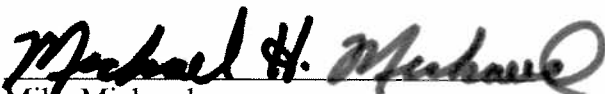

Sander Levin
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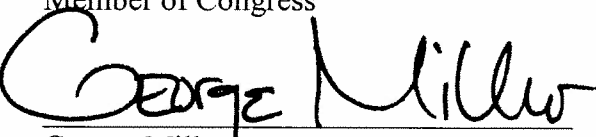

Frank LoBiondo
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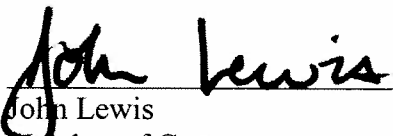

Jim McDermott
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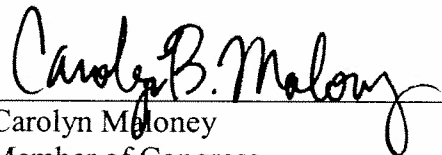

Mike Michaud
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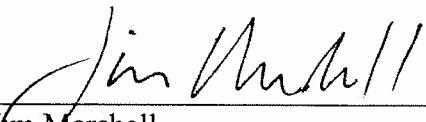

George Miller
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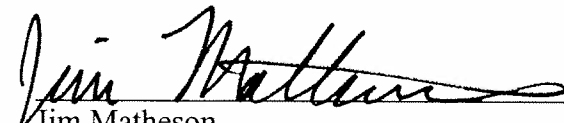

Dennis Moore
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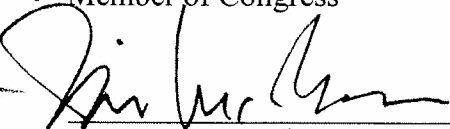

Rick Larsen
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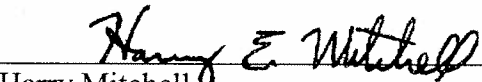

Carolyn Maloney
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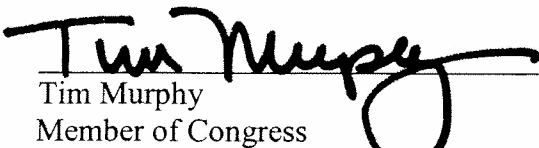

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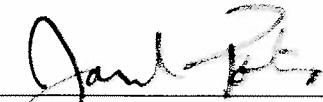

Frank Pallone
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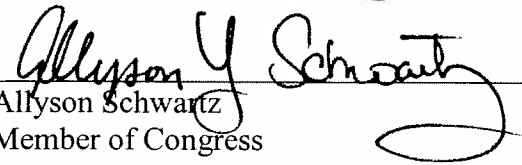
Collin Peterson
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Jared Polis
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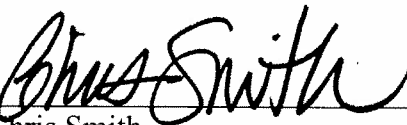
Allyson Schwartz
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Joe Sestak
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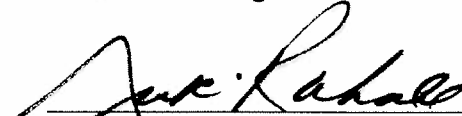
Chris Smith
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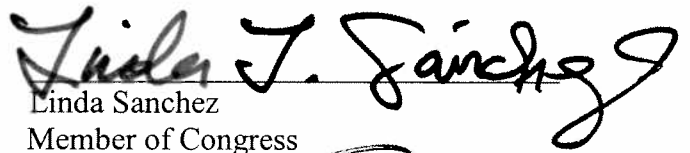
Ron Paul
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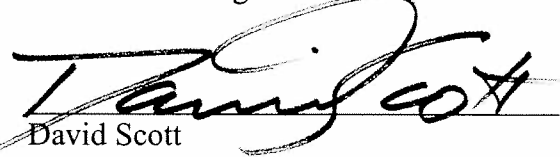
Todd Russell Platts
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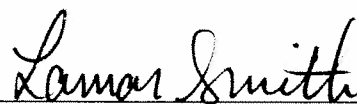
Nick Rahall
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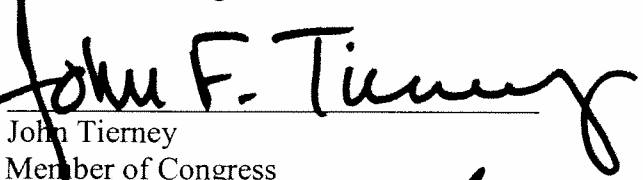
Linda Sanchez
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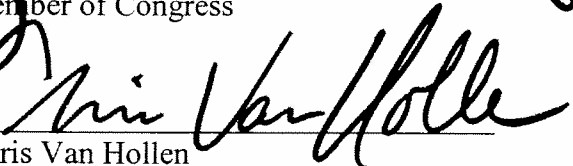
David Scott
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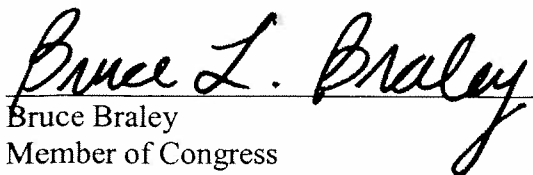
Lamar Smith
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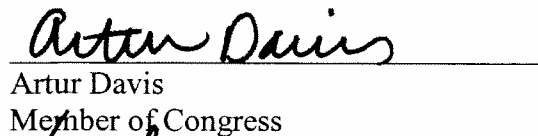
John Tierney
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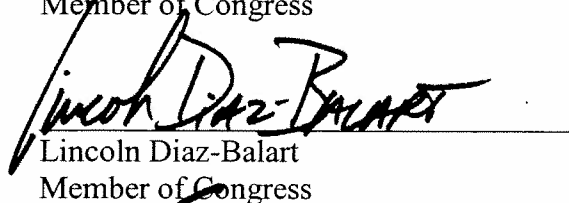


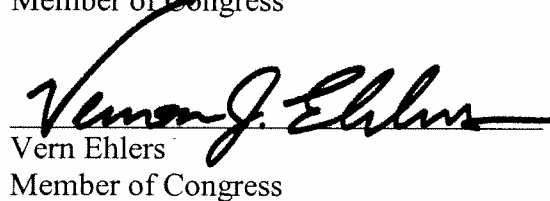
Chris Van Hollen
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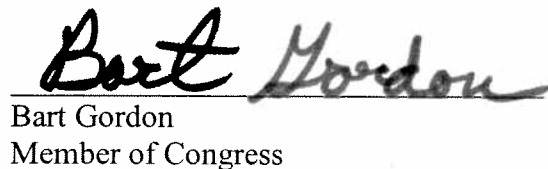

Bruce Braley
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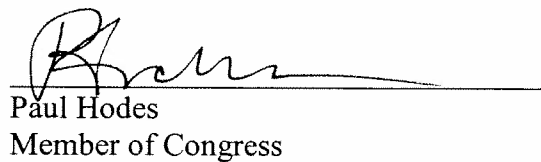

Chris Carney
Member of Congress

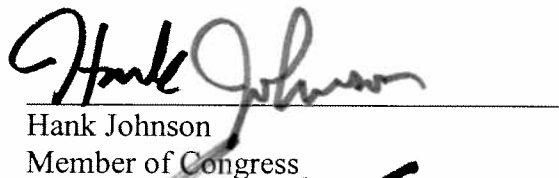

Artur Davis
Member of Congress

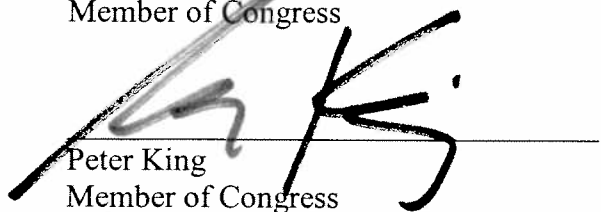

Lincoln Diaz-Balart
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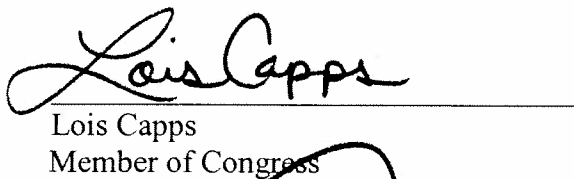

Vern Ehlers
Member of Congress

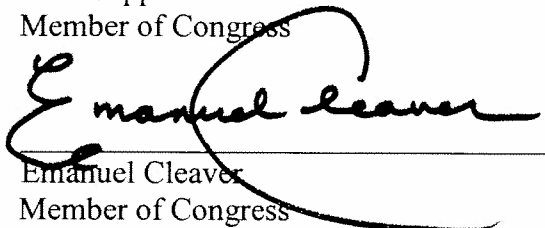

Bart Gordon
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Paul Hodes
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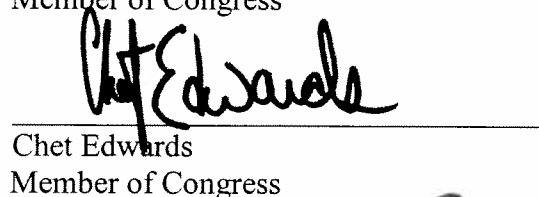

Hank Johnson
Member of Congress

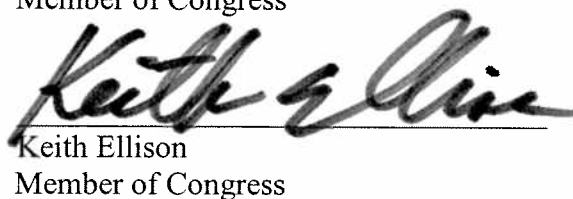

Peter King
Member of Congress

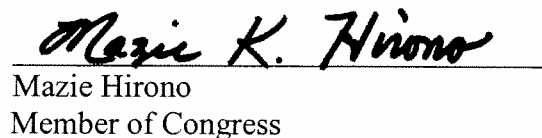

Lois Capps
Member of Congress

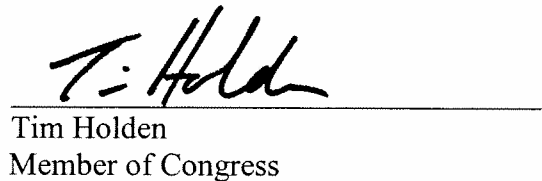

Emanuel Cleaver
Member of Congress

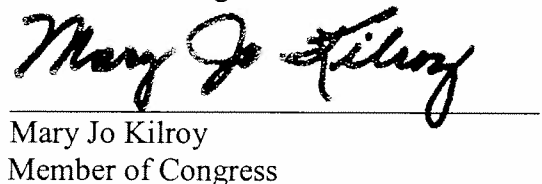

Bill Delahunt
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Chet Edwards
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Keith Ellison
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Mazie Hirono
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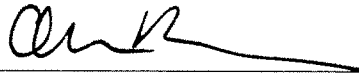

Tim Holden
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Mary Jo Kilroy
Member of Congress


Ron Klein
Member of Congress



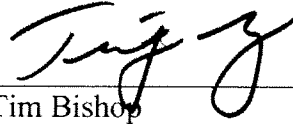
Rush Holt
Member of Congress



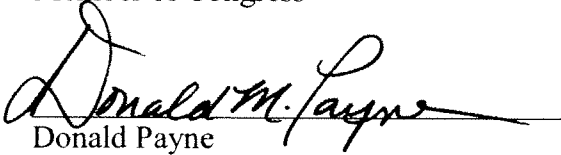
Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



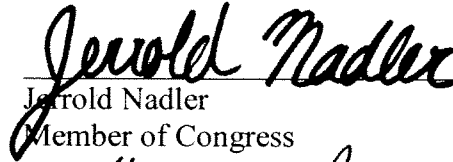
Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



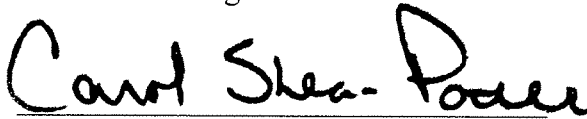
Tim Bishop
Member of Congress



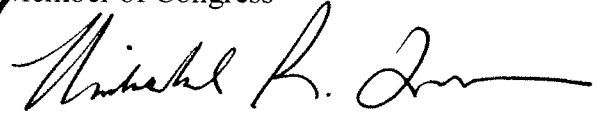
Donald Payne
Member of Congress



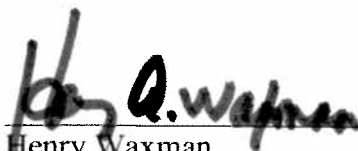
Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



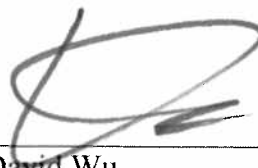
Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress



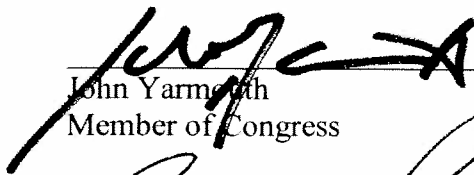
Michael Turner
Member of Congress



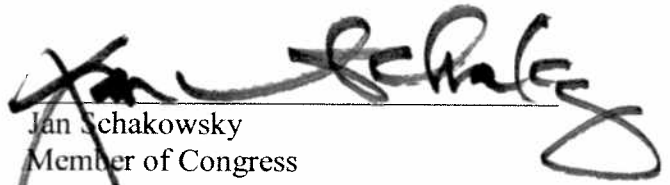
Henry Waxman
Member of Congress



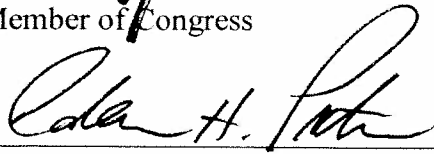
David Wu
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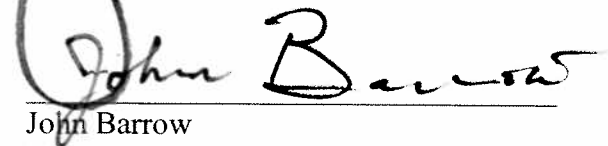
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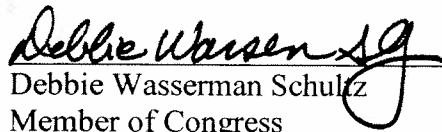
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



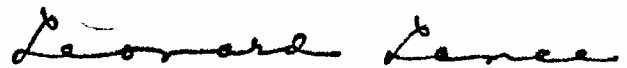
Adam Putnam
Member of Congress



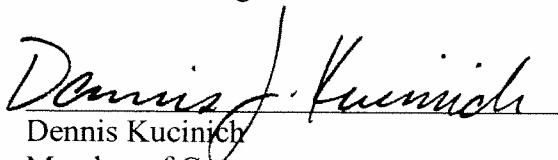
John Barrow
Member of Congress



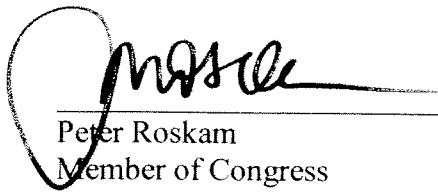
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
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Leonard Lance
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Dennis Kucinich
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Peter Roskam
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